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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/627,759	07/28/2003	Isoji Yao	030858	4426

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ARMSTRONG, KRATZ, QUINTOS, HANSON & BROOKS, LLP
1725 K STREET, NW
SUITE 1000
WASHINGTON, DC 20006

EXAMINER

PAIK, SANG YEOP

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3742	

DATE MAILED: 02/11/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/627,759	YAO, ISOJI	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Sang Y Paik	3742	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 November 2004.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-5 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-5 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1, 2 and 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sugo (US 5,076,467) in view of Langmuir et al (US 2,437,963) or Ohnishi et al (US 5,186,120).

Sugo shows a steam-supply apparatus including a pressurized steam sent from a steam-generating portion through an electromagnetic valve and a connecting tube. However, Sugo does not show providing a heater to the steam-blowing portion.

Langmuir shows a steam-supplying apparatus having a steam generating portion and a steam blowing portion where a heater is provided to the steam blowing portion to maintain the desired steam pressure and temperature. Ohnishi also shows providing a vapor generating portion and a vapor blowing portion where a heater is provided to the vapor blowing portion to maintain the desired vapor pressure and temperature.

In view of Langmuir or Ohnishi, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to provide the heater to the steam-blowing portion to maintain the desired steam pressure and temperature. Furthermore, the claimed heating steam circulation passage would inherently be present in the electromagnetic valve in order to pass the steam there through and would also be heated by the heated steam.

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3. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sugo in view of Langmuir or Ohnishi as applied to claims 1, 2 and 4 above, and further in view of Yamaguchi et al (US 5,803,938):

Sugo in view of Langmuir or Ohnishi shows the structure claimed except a pressure-reducing valve disposed on a steam passage between the boiler and the electromagnetic valve.

Yamaguchi et al shows a pressure adjuster (31) disposed between the vaporization chamber and a steam outlet valve. In view of Yamaguchi et al, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to adapt Sugo, as modified by Langmuir or Ohnishi, with a pressure reducing or adjuster valve to further control the rate at which the steam is generated and sent to the steam outlet valve including the electromagnetic valve.

4. Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sugo in view of Langmuir or Ohnishi as applied to claims 1, 2 and 4 above, and further in view of Hutchinson (US 6,647,204).

Sugo in view of Langmuir or Ohnishi shows the structure claimed except a return pipe.

Hutchinson shows a steam apparatus having a steam by pass valve that returns the heated steam back to the water supply (see Figure 24). In view of Hutchinson, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to adapt Sugo, as modified by Langmuir or Ohnishi, with a return pipe to control the output of the heated steam and to divert the unused or excess heated steam to the water supply for reuse.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

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6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Sang Y Paik whose telephone number is 571-272-4783. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (9:00-4:00) First Friday Off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robin Evans can be reached on 571-272-4777. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

S. Paik

Sang Y Paik
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3742

syp